

## **Amnesty International Canada (English Speaking) Statement of Concern Regarding Federally Sentenced Women in Canada**

Over the course of the last three years, Amnesty International Canada (English Speaking) has expressed concern regarding the conditions of incarceration for Federally Sentence Women (FSW) in Canada. Most recently, we have taken our concerns to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on the occasion of examination of Canada's fifth report by the Committee. Our brief to the Committee entitled "*Equal Rights*", put forward six recommendations regarding federally sentence women which called on the Canadian government to ensure that:

1. The recommendations made by the *Creating Choices* report<sup>1</sup>, *Arbour Commission*<sup>2</sup> and the Correctional Investigator's Annual Reports for 2000-2001 and 2001-2002, are implemented without delay, in cooperation with relevant organizations and cultural communities.
2. A greater number of alternative community facilities and community release programs are made available to minimum security women to prevent them from being negatively impacted by the high degree of security that will be implemented when maximum security FSW return to regional facilities.
3. FSW have reliable access to female doctors, mental health practitioners, and other program and service personnel, and also to women-centred and culturally sensitive programs and services.
4. FSW with mental illness and disabilities are incarcerated in facilities that enable safe interaction with others and are provided with women-centred and culturally sensitive support services.
5. A security classification system, solely for women, be created in consultation with experts in the field of female offenders, and the Aboriginal community.
6. CSC staff who work with FSW receive regular and intensive training on issues of gender sensitivity, racism, and supporting women with mental illnesses and disabilities.

In addition to these recommendations, Amnesty International Canada (English Speaking) believes that their effective and efficient implementation is dependent upon the creation, by the federal government, of an independent oversight body. This body should also be responsible for providing FSW with adequate redress mechanisms and remedies for prisoners whose Charter and human rights have been violated.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Creating Choices: The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women*, Correctional Service of Canada (1990) [http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/toce\\_e.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/toce_e.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> *Commission of Inquiry Into Certain Events at the Prison for Women in Kingston*. Public Works and Government Service (1996) [http://www.justicebehindthewalls.net/resources/arbours\\_report/arbours\\_rpt.htm](http://www.justicebehindthewalls.net/resources/arbours_report/arbours_rpt.htm).